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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 09 TEL AVIV 000922

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STATE FOR S/CT COORDINATOR AMB. CRUMPTON AND NEA/IPA (MAHER)  
PENTAGON FOR OSD ISRAEL DESK OFFICER ANDERSON  
TREASURY FOR PATRICK HEFFERNAN  
UNVIE FOR CD DELEGATION

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/24/2016

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PINR](#) [PINS](#) [PGOV](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [ASEC](#) [EG](#) [JO](#) [IS](#) [COUNTERTERRORISM](#) [GOI](#) [EXTERNAL](#) [ISRAELI](#) [PALESTINIAN](#) [AFFAIRS](#)

SUBJECT: U.S.-ISRAEL JOINT COUNTERTERRORISM GROUP (JCG)

MEETING, FEBRUARY 22, 2006

Classified By: Ambassador Richard H. Jones. Reasons: 1.4 (b, d).

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SUMMARY  
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1. (C) On February 22, the Israeli MFA hosted the latest session of the U.S.-Israel Joint Counterterrorism Group (JCG) -- the prior one having occurred over a year and a half earlier. The Israeli side stressed the importance it placed on the JCG's resumption (following the January meeting of the Joint POL-MIL Group (JPMG) and the November 2005 Strategic Dialogue) within the framework of U.S.-Israel bilateral relations. The MFA rolled out its experts on terrorism and terror finance to brief on HAMAS and the new political challenge it poses, the continued threat posed by Hizballah, the situations in Syria and Lebanon, the multilateral approach to counterterrorism (CT), legal aspects of CT, and the MANPAD threat. The Directorate of Military Intelligence provided its assessments on terrorist threats to Israel and on the Global Jihad. Israel's National Security Council was represented by Deputy NSA Daniel Arditi, who co-chaired the Israeli side with the MFA's new Deputy Director General for Strategic Affairs, Ambassador Miriam Ziv.

2. (C) The U.S. side, led by State Counterterrorism Coordinator Ambassador Henry Crumpton, made presentations on terror finance, safehavens, and the future of the Technical Support Working Group (TSWG). The two sides agreed on a set of action items (para. 22) and agreed to hold the next JCG session in six months. The plenary session of the JCG was followed by a full day of panel discussions at the NSC on February 23, and a meeting with the director of Military Intelligence (septels). END SUMMARY.

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ISRAEL PREPARING FOR GLOBAL JIHAD  
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3. (C) Israeli MFA Deputy Director General Miriam Ziv opened the plenary session by making the following points:

A. Israel believes that terrorism needs to be dealt with at the international, regional and national level. On the national level, Israel is disturbed by HAMAS's entry into politics. More needs to be done to raise public awareness about the phenomenon of terrorist groups using politics to achieve their agendas.

B. Israel is reaching out to other countries on the subject of counterterrorism. It is discussing the legal aspects of counterterrorism with India, and will soon discuss the matter with China.

4. (C) Deputy National Security Adviser Daniel Arditi identified the three main threats facing Israel as HAMAS, Hizballah and the Global Jihad. Arditi said he spends more than 50 percent of his time trying to understand the Global Jihad, and that Israel needs assistance from the U.S. on this issue.

5. (C) Ambassador Crumpton referred the Israeli side to Secretary Rice's Georgetown University speech on

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transformational diplomacy, underscoring her point that the regional approach is vital in combating the formation of terrorist safehavens in border areas. Crumpton suggested that more thought needs to be given to how countries measure success in fighting al-Qa'ida and Hizballah.

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ASCENDANT HAMAS REACHING OUT FOR LEGITIMACY  
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6. (C) Israeli MFA Strategic and Economic Affairs Bureau Head Daniel Kutner said the following about HAMAS and the current political situation:

A. HAMAS's victory in the January 25 Palestinian Legislative Council elections was the continuation of a five-year trend on the Palestinian side, in which the masses impose strategic choices on the Palestinian Authority (PA) leadership. This

trend threatens to undo the Oslo achievements of the 1990s. The Palestinian electorate elected HAMAS to power, knowing that it would have an adverse impact on Palestinian relations with Israel and the peace process.

**B.** The rise of political Islam in the Middle East and failure by Fatah and PA Chairman Abu Mazen to lead the Palestinians were the main reasons behind HAMAS' ascendancy.

**C.** HAMAS will continue to seek legitimacy through contact with foreign governments, and to secure foreign aid. HAMAS will make tactical adjustments, as necessary, without sacrificing its long-term, basic aim of recovering Palestine in its entirety, or altering its worldview that sees Israel as the oppressor, and the Palestinians as victims. HAMAS leaders have already visited Egypt, Turkey and Iran, and will visit Russia in the near future. HAMAS leaders are not necessarily receiving high-level attention during the visits, but are not "paying a political price" for their visits, either.

**D.** In Israel's view, HAMAS seems intent on (1) forming a broad coalition government so that it will be able to assign blame for failures to other coalition members; and (2) keeping a weak Abu Mazen in his position. While HAMAS's political program appears to be based on a long-term continuation of the 2005 cease-fire (hudna), it is not speaking about the permanent end to conflict or recognition of a Jewish state, and is reinforcing its own military capabilities and consolidating power. HAMAS wants to keep a tight leash on Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) and other radical terrorist groups.

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HIZBALLAH ADAPTING, USING POLITICS AS A TOOL  
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**7.** (C) On Hizballah, Kutner said the following:

**A.** Hizballah is adapting its strategic concept to changes in the international environment that are working against it. (He cited, as changes, Iran's "collision course" with the international community, increased international pressure on Syria, and Israel's disengagement from Gaza).

**B.** Hizballah still wants to preserve its jihadist nature and thus continues to coordinate with Iran and Syria.

**C.** Hizballah joined the Lebanese government in order to influence it from within in a step-by-step way. It wants to form a coalition that will prevent the implementation of UNSCR 1559.

**D.** Hizballah has "vigorously" renewed its activities along the Lebanon-Israel border, and continues to claim credit for Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 2000.

**8.** (C) Kutner added that Israel's assessment is that the election of a new Lebanese president could cause a nationwide crisis as it forces pro- and anti-Hizballah forces to clash with one another.

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SYRIA WEAK BUT STILL SPONSORING TERROR  
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**9.** (C) On Syria, Kutner said the following:

**A.** President Bashar al-Assad's regime is under no serious internal threat, even though his personal position has weakened. Bashar al-Assad will not be personally weakened as a result of the UN's investigation into the Hariri assassination. This is especially so as chief investigator Mehlis has been replaced.

**B.** Syria is coordinating closely with Iran in the wake of HAMAS's victory in January 2005 Palestinian Legislative Council elections. (NOTE: Ambassador Ziv added that the Israeli press reported earlier in the day claims that the Iranians told HAMAS that they will finance terrorist attacks against Israel. END NOTE.)

**C.** Syria's relations with HAMAS are excellent. Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) is controlled out of Damascus.

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REVIEW OF TERRORIST THREATS TO ISRAEL  
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**10.** (C) An Israeli Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI) representative said the following about terrorist threats to Israel:

**A.** Hizballah presents a multi-layered threat. It is a threat to Lebanon's internal stability. It is behind an "ongoing confrontation" along Israel's northern border. It has deployed activities around the globe -- including to distant places like Argentina. It is developing strategic capabilities, an example of which is its work with UAVs. It

assists the Palestinians in their conflict with Israel by supporting local Palestinian cells with finances, know-how and encouragement. Deputy NSA General Arditi claimed that in 2005, the five main terrorist attacks in Israel were supported by Hizballah, which he said sent the money for the attacks into Israel through Lebanon. Arditi warned that, as a result of disengagement, Hizballah and HAMAS now have more maneuvering space in the Gaza Strip.

1B. The factors shaping the terrorist threat against Israel include disengagement, the cease-fire (tadiyah), Palestinian elections, and Israeli CT policy. Disengagement has led to a reduction in the number of terrorist attacks. The terrorists' modus operandi has not changed, however, and they continue to fire artillery and Kassam rockets from the Gaza Strip, and send out suicide bombers from the West Bank. HAMAS restrained itself in 2005 in accordance with the cease-fire, but is regrouping for the "next phase of operations," and is improving its weapons. PIJ is leading the attacks against Israel now, and is trying to create a "jihadist front" during what PIJ terms, "the appeasement phase." The PIJ often responds to IDF actions in the Gaza Strip by attacking from the West Bank, and vice-versa. It is upgrading the quality of its explosives and weapons. (NOTE: The DMI briefer said that the notion that Katyusha rockets have entered the Gaza Strip remains unverified. Arditi said he does not believe the Palestinians have MANPADS or Katyushas. END NOTE.)

1C. Israel is concerned about smuggling on its southern border. The Egyptian border guard forces are slowly deploying to the Egypt-Gaza border, but Israel expects that smuggling into Israel and Gaza will be allowed to reach a certain level. (NOTE: Arditi admitted that Israel has seen some improvement in how the Egyptians have controlled the border over the last few months. He nevertheless requested that the USG tell Egypt that it expects Egypt to tighten up security along its border with Gaza and Israel. END NOTE.) The main smuggling route is from Gaza to Egypt to Israel. Israel is concerned that tons of TNT and thousands of rifles will be smuggled into Gaza from Egypt. Israel is afraid that HAMAS now has an "open route" to Egypt. The DMI assesses that the Bedouin "are heavily involved" in smuggling all types of items into Israel. The Egyptians have neglected the Bedouin in the Sinai, and have allowed them to form connections with terrorist groups. (NOTE: Arditi said that he is certain that Bedouin were involved in the terrorist attacks on Taba and Sharm-el-Sheik. He said that he does not believe that HAMAS is involved in terrorist attacks in the Sinai. END NOTE.)

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REVIEW OF THE GLOBAL JIHAD  
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11. (C) The DMI presenter switched to a presentation on the Global Jihad, saying:

1A. The Global Jihad relies on globally-positioned al-Qa'ida cells that are strictly organized and operated by committees. As examples, he claimed that the Pakistan-Afghanistan border is operated by al-Qa'ida's "internal unit", and that an "external unit" -- led by Hamza Rambia until his death last year -- runs global operations. (NOTE: The DMI presenter said Israel believes the last attacks run by the external unit were the London bombings, and that the unit will recover from Rambia's death. END NOTE.) The third layer consists of local organizations. Since 9/11, four to six of these local organizations -- including Jemaah Islamiya and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) -- have enlarged their agendas to hit Western targets.

1B. The Global Jihad also enjoys support from local-level terrorist elements that operate in the name of Global Jihad without formal connections to al-Qa'ida. These groups radicalize disenfranchised Muslim communities in Europe. One such group was behind the Madrid bombing. Israel sees these kinds of groups active in the Netherlands and the U.S. The DMI presenter claimed that one unspecified group worked with local gangs in California to attack military bases and synagogues in the U.S.

1C. All the elements of the Global Jihad are being directed by the al-Qa'ida leadership located in the border region between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Global Jihad has developed well-oiled logistical networks for recruiting and the raising and transfer of funds. Activists are being sent across borders, to places like Casablanca (where they launched a terrorist attack in May 2003) and Iraq. The DMI presenter added that Iraq now exports terrorism.

1D. Israel does not know what Usama Bin Ladin's health situation is like, but believes his power has diminished, while the power of Ayman al-Zawahiri and Zarqawi has increased. Zawahiri is physically located with the al-Qa'ida leadership and controls the organization. Zarqawi is farther afield but enjoys glory as a fighter. Both de-facto leaders are focused on the Middle East and are bent on toppling governments in the region and destroying Israel.

1E. The following affects al-Qa'ida's operations: the situation in Iraq; the growing terrorist threat to Jordan, Egypt and the Sinai; and what the briefer cited as the relative freedom the Palestinians enjoy as a result of disengagement and the cease-fire. The DMI presenter claimed that Palestinians within the territories are now trying to establish contacts with "jihadists" via the Internet, and that "many Palestinians in Gaza" are claiming they work for al-Qa'ida. The DMI presenter said that DMI has not yet found connections between al-Qa'ida and the terrorist attacks in the Sinai in 2005, but believes it eventually will.

1F. Cooperation between Palestinians in refugee camps in Lebanon and terrorists in Iraq -- and the role of "Lebanese infrastructure" in the struggle for Iraq -- are growing. Syria is now a main transit country, and Israel is worried that the Muslim Brotherhood there will grow in power as Bashar al-Assad's regime weakens. Israel is concerned that the fall of a moderate Arab regime will boost the Global Jihad's influence worldwide. Israel expects to see more regular attacks in the years ahead -- attacks that cross borders, that inflict massive destruction ("mega-attacks"), and which involve foreigners who are not necessarily suspicious looking. (NOTE: Ambassador Ziv expressed concern that HAMAS and Hizballah's direct links to Iran and Syria raise the potential of their acquisition of WMD. Arditi said that Israel does not see HAMAS and Hizballah showing any intention of obtaining WMD. END NOTE.)

12. (C) Ambassador Crumpton said that the USG sees Iran increasingly providing technical support and training to the perpetrators of IED attacks in southern Iraq. He noted the danger of a "trifecta" emerging in Lebanon that would involve Hizballah, Palestinian rejectionist groups, and groups linked to al-Qa'ida. He noted that foreign fighters entering Iraq tend to die there, and that those who do leave usually become demoralized.

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U.S. PRESENTATIONS ON TERRORIST SAFEHAVENS AND FINANCE  
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13. (C) U.S. National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) Representative Gershon Kieval presented for the U.S. side a briefing on terrorist safehavens, highlighting the following:

1A. Congress requires the U.S. intelligence community to report annually on terrorist safehavens around the world. There are many views on what a "terrorist safehaven" constitutes. The authors of the annual report to Congress consider safehavens as areas where concentrations of terrorists operate with relative security. Safehavens can be found in countries where ineffective governments exist, or where governments sanction terrorists; in ungoverned areas; and in areas that could become sanctuaries for terrorists with very little difficulty.

1B. Based on terms of reference used, the authors have identified the following countries as safehavens: Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Somalia.

1C. In addition, the report notes that safehavens also exist in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the Sahel region in Africa, and the tri-border area in Latin America. Kieval said that analysts believe that Turkey and Bangladesh could become safehavens if the conditions change in those countries.

14. (C) Deputy NSA Arditi said in response that Israel believes there may be a growing rivalry between Hizballah and al-Qa'ida in Lebanon. Kieval replied that this would make sense, but that the U.S. has not seen evidence of this.

15. (C) MFA Principal Deputy Legal Advisor Daniel Taub delivered the Israeli presentation on terror finance, making the following points:

1A. Israel is dissatisfied with the UK and French governments for not mustering the political will to enact legislation that would close two particular funds -- Interpal in the UK and CDSP in France -- that the Israelis claim are known sources of terror financing. Israel believes that the willingness of British Jews to accept an out-of-court settlement of a private lawsuit against an Islamic fund in the UK has created the false impression that the British government has cracked down on terror financing there.

1B. Israel would like the U.S. to target a public diplomacy campaign at Western European countries to increase public awareness of terror financing emanating from their countries and support legislation to eradicate it.

16. (C) Patrick Heffernan from the Treasury Department made the following points in his presentation:

1A. Treasury is frustrated with the inefficiency of the UN process as a tool to counter terrorism financing, and is trying a different tactic.

1B. The USG is now focusing on individual states that lack the national capabilities to comply with UN standards for countering terror financing, and will consider targeted financial sanctions against such states in an effort to achieve compliance.

1C. The USG has struggled to find levers to stop financial flows to HAMAS and Hizballah and welcomes Israeli suggestions for how the U.S. can better help.

1D. The USG is seeking willing partners to disrupt trade and financial flows to countries where Hizballah operates, particularly in South America and West Africa. (NOTE: The Israeli side responded by offering to cooperate on countries in South America and West Africa with vulnerable financial sectors that are being exploited by Hizballah. END NOTE.)

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MFA WANTS MORE ACTION IN THE MULTILATERAL APPROACH TO CT  
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117. (C) MFA Nonproliferation and Counterterrorism Department Director Yehuda Yaakov made the following points in his presentation on multilateral counterterrorism efforts:

1A. Israel sees terrorism proliferating, in much the same way as the WMD threat is proliferating. Israel also sees a symbiotic relationship between state sponsors of terrorism and their terrorist proxies.

1B. The international community needs to confront both active and passive support for terrorists. The passive area is more difficult to address. Lebanon is an instructive example: The GOL acts against jihadists, but helps Hizballah. Israel rejects this trade-off.

1C. With respect to the way ahead, the international community has a good road map in all the CT-related UNSCRs passed to date. They need to be fully implemented. That has not happened so far. Israel believes that UN member states need to be called to task under Chapter 7 with respect to implementation of UNSCR 1373 on terrorist safehavens.

1D. There is plenty of discussion about terror finance, but no discussion about the "dawa" -- the social welfare infrastructure that HAMAS uses to facilitate terrorist attacks. The dawa needs to be addressed.

1E. Incitement to violence must also be addressed.

1F. In Israel's view, there needs to be more of a coalition of like-minded nations and organizations arrayed against terrorism. Israel supports the UN's Counterterrorism Action Group (CTAG), but is aware of an ongoing dispute between the CTAG and the UN's Counterterrorism Center (CTC). It would help if the U.S. would "push the process in the right direction."

1G. Israel does not feel comfortable with passing information directly to the UN's al-Qa'ida Committee.

118. (C) Ambassador Crumpton agreed that there is a leadership problem in the UN, but suggested that countries like Israel should help countries faltering on the CT front to identify problems and find solutions for them, rather than simply exhorting those countries to action and shaming them by "naming names."

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MFA LEGAL ADVISER ON THE LEGAL ASPECTS OF CT  
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119. (C) Israeli MFA Principal Deputy Legal Advisor Daniel Taub highlighted the following in his presentation on the legal aspects of fighting terrorism:

1A. The laws Israel applies in fighting terrorism today were passed prior to Israel's independence in 1948, and in early 1948.

1B. Israel's Ministry of Justice has a team that is looking into how other countries confront incitement. The GOI feels the need to strike the right balance between freedom of speech and incitement.

1C. The Israeli Supreme Court is reviewing the legality of targeted killings, the security fence, and the "neighbor procedure" (whereby Palestinian neighbors are sent into a home in which a wanted Palestinian is hiding, with instructions to encourage the wanted person to surrender).

1D. Israel is a party to eight of the 12 UN counterterrorism conventions and protocols. It is working hard to ratify the remaining UN CT protocols and conventions. Israel has objections to the International Convention Against the Taking of Hostages, so it is unlikely that Israel will ratify that convention in the near future. (NOTE: Taub did not explain what Israel's objections were, but stated that they are very complex and have a long history behind them. END NOTE.)



¶E. Israel is concerned with Liechtenstein's addition to Article 18 on the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism. Israel still has concerns about references in the convention's preamble to the "struggle with foreign occupation."

¶F. The GOI would appreciate learning what the USG's position is on the international conference that Egypt is proposing in order to make headway on the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism.

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MANPADS: ISRAEL TO PROPOSE DISCUSSION OF AIRPORT SECURITY  
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¶20. (C) Israel MFA Arms Control Department Director Alon Bar made the following points on MANPADS:

¶A. MANPADS offer terrorists an enormous, destructive capability at a low price. Israel believes international awareness about the MANPAD threat needs to be raised. The "costs" of transferring MANPADS to terrorists must be raised. An UNGA resolution and several Wassenaar Arrangement and OSCE documents refer to the MANPAD problem, but these are not enough. Israel feels that airport security and the protection of aircraft need to be discussed as a package. Israel intends to start discussion on this package proposal at this year's Conference on Disarmament, starting April 5.

¶B. The Israeli MFA will host a seminar on MANPADS on April 4-5. Representatives from 34 countries have been invited. The Russians and Chinese have already replied positively. The U.S. will send a delegation of three or four people.

¶C. The November 2002 MANPAD attack on an Israeli charter aircraft in Mombasa has forced Israel to upgrade MANPAD countermeasures on Israeli civilian aircraft.

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TSWG EXTENDED FOR TEN YEARS, WITH FLEXIBLE SPENDING CAP

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¶21. (C) State Technical Support Working Group (TSWG) Technical Programs Director Michael Jakub highlighted the following points in his presentation on the TSWG:

¶A. Both sides agree that TSWG is a success story and benefits both Israel and the U.S. Its goal is to focus joint scientific research into products that are operationally relevant and can come on-line within a short time.

¶B. A new Memorandum of Agreement was signed in March 2005 that extends the TSWG for ten years and sets a USD 250 million spending ceiling that can be increased, if necessary. The budget for FY 2006 is USD 25 million. There are currently 58 projects in train, including new projects on chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) countermeasures, and a project looking at future threats.

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WRAP UP AND ACTION ITEMS  
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¶22. (C) The two delegations agreed on the following action items and possible areas of cooperation for follow-up in preparation for the next JCG session in six months time:

¶A. Terror Finance in Europe and Abroad: Both sides agreed that a combined approach to Europe is worthwhile, and that attention needs to be paid to other regions. It was agreed that an interagency working group should be established to facilitate this cooperation.

¶B. Public Awareness and Public Diplomacy: Both sides agreed that the U.S. and Israel hold a different view from Europe on how to wage the Global War on Terror, and that the U.S. and Israel should work together to narrow the difference with Europe.

¶C. Analytical Exchange: Both sides agreed to exchange information and ideas over the next six months on how best to confront the challenges in points A and B.

¶D. Cooperation in the UN: Both sides agreed to seek opportunities for enhanced cooperation in the UN on issues such as terror finance, terror travel, arms embargoes and the CTAG.

¶E. Lebanon: Both sides agreed to seek opportunities to enhance cooperation in order to help transform Lebanon into a responsible and responsive state.

¶F. Homeland Security: Both sides agreed to explore further opportunities for cooperation on homeland defense, recognizing that Israel has considerable experience that could be of use to the U.S.

¶23. (U) Regarding the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), ISN/WMDT Deputy Director David Weekman encouraged

Israel to participate in a PSI exercise that Turkey will host in May, and a conference that Poland will host this year.

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PARTICIPANTS  
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124. (U) Representing Israel:

MFA Deputy Director General Ambassador Miriam Ziv (chair)  
Daniel Arditi, deputy national security advisor, NSC (deputy chair)  
Daniel Kutner, head, Strategic and Economic Affairs Bureau, MFA  
Yehuda Yaakov, director, Nonproliferation and Counterterrorism Department, MFA  
Joseph Moustaki, deputy director, Nonproliferation and Counterterrorism Department, MFA  
Dan Arbell, director, North America Department, MFA  
Daniel Taub, principal deputy legal advisor, Legal Division, MFA  
Alon Bar, director, Arms Control Department, MFA  
Eynat Shlein, counselor for Middle Eastern Affairs, Embassy of Israel, Washington, D.C.  
A representative from the Directorate of Military Intelligence's (DMI) Production Division

125. (U) Representing the U.S.:

Ambassador Henry Crumpton, S/CT (chair)  
Ambassador Richard H. Jones, U.S. Embassy Tel Aviv (deputy chair)  
Patrick Worman, regional policy advisor, S/CT  
Michael Jakub, director of Technical Program, S/CT  
David Weekman, deputy director, ISN/WMDT  
Alison Maher, POL-MIL Officer, NEA/IPA  
Patrick Heffernan, director, Global Affairs, Treasury  
Gershon Kieval, National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC)  
DAO Rep, U.S. Embassy Tel Aviv  
ECON Rep, U.S. Embassy Tel Aviv  
POL-MIL Officer, U.S. Embassy Tel Aviv

126. (U) S/CT Coordinator Ambassador Crumpton cleared on this report.

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JONES